United Nations
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

35th PLENARY MEETING
Friday, 22 October 1993 at 10 a.m.

NEW YORK

President: Mr. INSANALLY (Guyana)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m

AGENDA ITEM 45

INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE REHABILITATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF NICARAGUA: AFTERMATH OF THE WAR AND NATURAL DISASTERS

(*a*) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/48/318 and Corr.1)

(*b*) DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/48/L.10)

The PRESIDENT: I call on the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/48/L.10.

Mr. PALLAIS (Nicaragua) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: Allow me at the outset to thank the Secretary-General for his efforts on behalf of the economic and social reconstruction of Nicaragua and for publishing the report contained in document A/48/318 and Corr.1.

The vision of a world in deep and continuing transformation - one in which our societies are the principal factors for change, the beginning and end points of the essence of man - is shocking when we think of the enormous responsibility of the United Nations, which holds the future of the world in its hands.

Nicaragua has emerged from a history filled with the hallmarks of violence into the modern world and the civility of the contemporary global village, taking a road strewn with many difficulties of all kinds. Contemporary sociology and political science have decided to call this phenomenon a "transition" - the passage from one state to another.

In the specific circumstances of our own socio-political, economic and cultural evolution - as recently described by our President before the General Assembly - Nicaraguans have been going through a complex stage of transition that is helping us to move from confrontation to democratic consensus, from a centralized economy to a social market economy, from totalitarianism to democracy, from war to peace.

The Government of Nicaragua, with the assistance of the democratic political forces and the support of the people, is making enormous efforts to overcome its major challenges: the aftermath of war, and poverty and natural disasters. Though we have managed to restore a certain degree of stability to the country, it is not as solid or permanent as we would wish. We must urgently improve the living conditions of a population that needs health care, education and food - that is, a dignified standard of living.

For a number of reasons, the macroeconomic measures we have taken have not sufficed to give a decisive impetus to our economic recovery and thus bring our country back into the world economy. We have been able partially to service our debt since 1991, but debt-servicing has now reached unsustainable levels. Without a prompt and drastic solution to our inherited debt - a solution in which 95 per cent of its stock is forgiven - Nicaragua's economic and social recovery will be virtually impossible.

This record is subject to correction.
Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Section, Room C-178, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

93-86945 (E)

Distr. GENERAL

A/48/PV.35
10 November 1993

ENGLISH

It must be emphasized that during the decade of conflict in the 1980s, the direct and indirect military cooperation received by Nicaragua was of the order of more than $6 billion, representing more than 50 per cent of the external debt burdening the Nicaraguan people today. In other words, more economic assistance was available for the war than is available today to deal urgently with the aftermath of that war and to strengthen peace and democracy.

My country faces a most complex dilemma in continuing to pay this inherited debt, undermining the foundations of its economic and social reconstruction. Yet over the past three years we have paid the multilateral financial institutions more than we have received for economic and social investment.

Thus, after meeting our obligations to the financial institutions, our liquid resources to promote the actual production of goods and services are scarce. During the four years of the Chamorro Government, of every dollar of liquid external cooperative finance and subsequent new loans, only two cents has remained for economic and social investment after paying for oil imports. These special circumstances - which must be reversed - have led to a gradual deterioration of social conditions: critical poverty, malnutrition, unemployment or underemployment exceeding 45 per cent, precarious health services, and a high dropout rate from school - to which we must add the natural disasters that beset us in 1992 and 1993.

To respond coherently to the consequences of the crisis, the Government of Nicaragua, in consultation with the United Nations and multilateral financial institutions, formulated in January 1993 a development strategy combining social policies with economic policies and enhancement of Government offices' administrative capacity.

Nicaragua welcomed with gratitude and hope resolutions 47/118 of 18 December 1992 and 47/169 of 22 December 1992. We deeply appreciate the contributions of organs and agencies of the United Nations system in various areas, along with the various initiatives supported by the international community.

In the framework of the United Nations, our President's request to the Secretary-General for the establishment of an active group of countries friends of Nicaragua will play a key role for our country in an international context characterized by reduced flows of international cooperation and by our own need for external cooperation. The historic effort of our people and our Government to consolidate democracy cannot succumb; Nicaragua must not become a delayed victim of the cold war.

While the relationship between economics and politics may seem obvious, the close links between economics and democracy are the subject of increasing scrutiny by scholars. In that connection, we agree with the Secretary-General's view, stated in his report on the work of the Organization, that

> "Without peace, there can be no development and there can be no democracy. Without development, the basis for democracy will be lacking and societies will tend to fall into conflict. And without democracy, no sustainable development can occur; without such development, peace cannot long be maintained." *(A/48/1, para. 11)*

The deterioration of social conditions has eroded the credibility of the democratic political institutions we want to strengthen and institutionalize in my country. The despair of some minority social sectors has sometimes been expressed in desperate and violent action.

Still, no viable solution can emerge from the exasperation of those who one way or another are ultimately making apologies for violence. To the contrary, history has consistently shown that without democracy and democratic institutions there can be no genuine, true political development, just as it has confirmed that dialogue and political negotiation are the best means of settling disputes.

My Government's efforts to make the transition from war to peace, from totalitarianism to democracy, show the complexity of our process as well as the indissoluble links between peace, democracy and development.

The ongoing process of disarming civilians is contributing to the demilitarization of our society after a decade of military confrontation and stark political polarization. The demobilization of groups, rearmed with socio-economic and political motivation; the resolute combat against rural banditry; the demining of large areas that were the scene of military conflict; the reduction of the army's budget and manpower: these have all contributed to the pacification of Nicaragua and to confirming that our President's policy of national reconciliation is the correct course.

Other activities include the gradual, effective solution of the problem of property ownership; the strengthening of

the judiciary; the resolution of conflicts within our National Legislative Assembly; and the work of the tripartite Commission to investigate charges of murder against former members of the Nicaraguan resistance, demobilized members of the army and other individuals. President Chamorro's political will to continue professionalizing and institutionalizing the armed forces through a bill on military organization that clearly subordinates the armed forces to the civilian authorities and the professionalization and institutionalization of the national police create better conditions for Nicaragua to build a State based on the rule of law that will provide security and guarantee justice to its citizens.

Nicaragua's three-faceted transition is unique and must therefore be addressed in a special way. In our view, that means not only recognizing the different conditions we face, but also making every possible effort to sustain and develop a process that is vital for our people and holds out hope to our region and to all those who have been supporting us in our time of trouble.

Thus Nicaragua hopes for unique, special treatment that will give it flexibility in implementing structural-adjustment measures, so that without losing the direction or aims of that necessary adjustment it can have access on preferential terms to loans giving incentives to social investment and local production, and so that we can bring into line with our situation the rate of fiscal adjustment, the lowering of tariffs and the freeing up of the financial system.

Like many other developing countries, Nicaragua continues to be plagued by the problem of external debt, and there must be a new approach to this problem for us to find stable and lasting solutions. Our country's external debt of $10.8 billion places us in a much worse position than any other high-debt, low-income country. Our prioritized annual debt servicing - I am referring here to the multilateral institutions and the Club of Paris - represents 76 per cent of projected exports, which makes it impossible to generate the level of investments necessary for our economic and social development.

Peace in Nicaragua also represents peace in Central America. On our national stability also depend, to a great extent, a range of differing types of processes that are all taking place at once as part of the regional process now under way towards political and economic integration. The settlement of the military conflicts in Nicaragua and El Salvador and the progress being made in Guatemala towards actively developing political negotiations with insurgent groups must be kept up in an interdependent, overall way.

We believe that the international community's contribution to these processes now unfolding to the benefit of our peoples is decisive if we are to establish Central America as the region of peace, democracy, freedom and development which we proclaimed, with the support of the General Assembly, in resolution 46/109. This is the only way to put us definitively and completely on the path of democracy and social progress that is being taken by other societies in a world that is ever more global and interdependent and where the bygone patterns of the cold war have passed away to reveal the urgency of allocating material resources to social development and human well-being.

Today we have come before this great General Assembly of the United Nations to reaffirm that our calling is as a peaceful, hard-working nation and to repeat our call for your countries to become part of our effort to consolidate peace and democracy not only in Nicaragua, but also in Central America. Nicaragua is in urgent need of that effort on the part of the international community, and of its resolute support, to sustain the aspirations of a people that wants to rebuild its country in peace, justice and democracy.

International assistance for rehabilitating and reconstructing Nicaragua is a practical, tangible, realistic and sound way of contributing to the values that will guide the progress of humanity into the next century, when the extreme poverty and want that resulted from the great imbalances and conflicts of the twentieth century will be just a tale told of a past to which the world society of the twenty-first century will not wish to return unless it wants to wipe itself out.

Today, my delegation, on behalf of all the sponsors, has the honour of introducing to this plenary meeting of the Assembly a draft resolution entitled "International assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua: aftermath of the war and natural disasters" and contained in document A/48/L.10.

The first, third and fifth preambular paragraphs are similar to those contained in resolution 47/169 on this same subject, which the Assembly adopted at its session last year.

In the second preambular paragraph the General Assembly would recall resolution 47/169 of 22 December 1992, and the fourth and sixth introduce into

the draft resolution new elements whose purpose is to incorporate aspects of particular relevance to the developing situation in Nicaragua. The most salient points concern the havoc wreaked on the country and its people by the recent hurricane; the socio-economic effects of applying adjustment measures that leave us no room for material growth and social investment and have led Nicaragua to request exceptional treatment, the better to be able to cope with the crisis it is going through; and the progress the Government of Nicaragua has made in securing a broad social consensus for the reconstruction and economic and social development.

In the operative part, paragraph 1 has the same wording as last year's resolution while paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 contain ideas that expand on it. Paragraphs 5 and 6 are procedural in nature.

Nicaragua needs the international community's support and solidarity to overcome the aftermath of the war and the natural disasters that have beset it in recent years. Unanimous adoption by the Assembly of the draft resolution we have submitted would send a clear signal of a political will to support the political and economic processes we are implementing in my country. Unanimous adoption and the international community's support and solidarity would consolidate peace in Nicaragua, and its democratic process, and the United Nations community could be proud, always, of such a magnificent contribution.

We are grateful to all the sponsors of the draft resolution which are listed in document A/48/L.10, and to all those which have joined in supporting it. For Nicaragua, the cooperation and support we have received is of great importance.

Mr. CORREA (Chile) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: Six days ago, in Santiago, Chile, during the seventh summit meeting of the Rio Group, which was attended by the Heads of State and Government of the Latin American and Caribbean countries of which that political concertation mechanism is composed, approved a declaration that reads as follows:

> "The Heads of State and Government of the Rio Group support the appeal made by the President of the Republic of Nicaragua, Mrs. Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, in her recent address to the General Assembly of the United Nations, to the effect that economic cooperation afforded her country should be increased, and they express their willingness to continue their resolute support with a view to contributing to solving Nicaragua's problems.
>
> "The Heads of State and Government of the Rio Group urge the international community and the financial agencies, particularly the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Inter-American Development Bank to grant Nicaragua treatment in line with the exceptional situation in that country, as a contribution to the democratic stability of Nicaragua and of the whole Central American region."

The declaration by the Heads of State and Government in the Rio Group reiterates something that had been sought at the United Nations through the resolution adopted to that effect, namely that there is a complete international consensus that the situation in Nicaragua, by reason of the special circumstances, necessitates assistance in the form of broad-based cooperation to enable Nicaragua to make a definitive recovery and promote sustained development; this would make its democratic process, and the peace it so desires, irreversible.

We must weigh the full meaning and consequences of the words addressed to the Assembly by the President of Nicaragua when she said:

> "The economic problem is our greatest source of instability, because it creates tensions in the political and social environment, jeopardizing national and regional stability. If foreign aid arrives late, if strong conditions are placed on it or it becomes a political tool, as happened in 1992 and is happening now, democracy in Nicaragua could collapse." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-eighth Session, Plenary Meetings, 8th meeting, p. 11)*

We do not want such a collapse to occur, and that is why we have included our effort in plans for cooperation with this fraternal country. The Governments of Latin America cannot stand idly by when any of the countries in the region, without exception, is in danger of collapse. Our duty is to help each and every one of them resolve its problems and crises while avoiding the internal confrontation and chaos that are so costly for their peoples.

In 1991 the President of the Republic of Chile attended the summit meeting of Central American leaders held at San Salvador. On that occasion President Aylwin formally announced the initiation of a programme of technical cooperation with Central America, within the framework of which our work with Nicaragua is proceeding.

Since that time, Chile's policy of technical cooperation has become a cornerstone of its relations with

the Central American region, particularly with Nicaragua. We have singled out that country, not only because of the particularly serious nature of its situation, but also because Chile wishes, through a resolute policy of cooperation, to make up for lost time in the relations between the two countries. We therefore appreciate the progress made in the development of the programmes that have already been established and which are now being fully executed. Of particular note are the new projects that are developing, especially in the social area, to help handicapped children and minors in need of special care. We are also studying a request for support in carrying out a programme to modernize and professionalize the national police force in Nicaragua.

From the foregoing it will be clear that the agreements being worked on at present for cooperation in selected sectors between the Nicaraguan Government and our International Cooperation Agency are of great importance to our future relations. Of especial relevance have been the programmes in support of universities and the training of human resources through post-graduate and masters fellowships.

Moreover, of special note is Chile's involvement of the private sector in this effort. Accordingly, an agreement has been signed between the Society for the Promotion of Manufacturing, an entity made up of private entrepreneurs in our country, and the Nicaraguan Association of Non-Traditional Exporters, the execution of which also involved resources from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Similarly, technical assistance in fisheries resources has been developed through the Chilean Institute for the Promotion of Fisheries and the Nicaraguan Institute for Fisheries. Similarly, through the Organization of American States (OAS), assistance was provided for the removal of mines, through a team of instructors-supervisors, a matter of particular importance to the safety of the population. This work has been subject to evaluation. A technical group set up to implement the agreements on bilateral cooperation has already held its first meeting.

All these tasks are part of a greater undertaking, namely supporting the enhancement and stability of democracy. Our country has maintained resolute and unconditional support for the process of democratization and pacification in Nicaragua, and we attach great value to efforts to ensure that all national sectors can be involved in the political and institutional life of the country within a constructive and fully legal framework.

To that end, among other activities pursued in this area, the Under-Secretaries for Government and for the presidency accompanied by the Superintendent of Insurance and Securities in Chile, attended a seminar in Managua last week on experiences in the transition to democracy, which was organized by the Government of Nicaragua and co-sponsored by the International Organization for Migration and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

This cooperation will help to promote achievement of the priority objectives in Nicaragua: peace, reconciliation, respect for human rights and the consolidation of democracy.

Despite these efforts it has become absolutely imperative to channel substantial financial resources to the cooperation that Chile and other countries have been giving so that it will be directed to the right purposes and developed effectively for the benefit of the population. Efforts in regard to training human resources would be pointless if these people did not have appropriate conditions in which to carry out their activities.

Nicaragua is in need of resources in order to revive all of its areas of productivity, and to that end the international community and multilateral financial bodies have a broad spectrum of areas into which to channel their efforts towards the attainment of that goal.

Experience shows that consolidating peace in the wake of a conflict needs to be linked to global development efforts in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres and resources should be channelled accordingly.

That applies absolutely to the situation in Nicaragua. The Government of Chile joins in the efforts being made by the Government of Nicaragua but it must also point out that the results cannot be perceived immediately. This requires understanding and support on the part of the international community and the strenuous efforts of all of the people towards the common objective of change and growth.

The consolidation of peace begins with practical and immediate measures to restore the normal functioning of society, to revive the economy, to restore the land and its productivity, and to organize the return and resettlement of displaced persons and refugees. It is also essential to reduce the volume of weapons in the hands of society at large, which is one element that leads to instability, and which may in turn lead to violence. Such steps require an

effort on the part of all the people of Nicaragua, not just of a few, since they are the ones who will lay the foundations for sustainable social, political and economic development.

For its part, international cooperation can help to lend support to a society that is still wounded but anxious to build an increasingly sound democracy, a democracy of mature coexistence.

Mr. ALBIN (Mexico) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: The Central American region has shown its unshakeable will to overcome decades of violence, instability and lack. The process of peacemaking has now spread to the entire region. For a very long time there has been a need for the good will of the countries of the subregion and sectors of their societies and for international support.

For Mexico, Central America is of priority interest because we border on the region and have cultural and historical links which bind us to it. My country has therefore undertaken cooperative activities on a continuing basis in order to support the recovery and economic development of the five countries of the region.

One of the activities that perhaps best reflect this was the signing in August 1992 of an agreement to liberalize trade with Central American countries, the final objective being the creation of an open area for investment and the free flow of goods and services.

Nicaragua is a country that is today facing serious challenges. It has been making serious efforts to rebuild its democracy, to give new dynamism to its economy in a society which has often been polarized. In addition to destructive actions on the part of people, there have been natural disasters which have worsened the already precarious economic and social conditions of the country. The economy, which has been marked by serious imbalances, has put Nicaragua into the category of lowest-income countries. The amount of its official debt is approximately $11,000 million. The per capita debt is the highest in the world.

In the midst of these difficulties, Nicaragua has begun a process of political reform directed towards national reconstruction, peacemaking, reduction of the army, and the demobilization of resistance. This process has gone along with consultation, dialogue and the reaching of agreement with the various political groups.

On the bilateral level, my country is participating in an intensive programme of cooperation with Nicaragua. Between January and October 1993, 60 projects were carried out in such spheres as combating poverty, telecommunications, energy, technical training, health, privatizing ports, agriculture, environment, labour and public administration.

When Mrs. Violeta Chamorro visited Mexico last August, the President of Mexico reaffirmed his support for collaborating in the stabilization of the Nicaraguan economy. He also expressed his concern over the manner in which various political forces have sought to resolve their differences with unlawful acts, which has negative effects on the efforts made by Nicaraguans to establish peace and reactivate the economy.

We are pleased to take note of the activities carried out by the United Nations system to help Nicaragua, in particular those of the United Nations Development Programme, as described in the report of the Secretary-General that was prepared in accordance with resolution 47/169. That document points out that one of the main problems of the transition is perhaps the lack of integrated policies and strategies for development and stabilization.

We must recognize that the efforts of the people and the Government of Nicaragua will be in vain if the community of nations and international organizations do not extend their fullest cooperation to enable Nicaragua to consolidate its own objectives of democracy and economic and social development. We urge the international community and financial organs, in particular the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Inter-American Development Bank, to give Nicaragua the help it deserves in the exceptional circumstances prevailing there.

For our part, I wish to reiterate here the unbending determination of the Government of Mexico to continue working in close cooperation with the brotherly country of Nicaragua, bilaterally or through any mechanism established, to enable it to move ahead on the road to peace and economic and social development. The appeal sent out by the Nicaraguan delegation to the international community to collaborate in those efforts is our appeal as well.

Hence, we have co-sponsored the draft resolution contained in document A/48/L.10, and we invite Member States to give it their unanimous support.

Mr. YAÑEZ BARNUEVO (Spain) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: The inclusion of the item entitled "International assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua: aftermath of the war and

natural disasters" in the agenda of the current session of the General Assembly makes clear how important it is that the United Nations continue to follow through in the process of rehabilitating and reconstructing a country that was mired in a conflict whose political, social and economic consequences require comprehensive attention and treatment on the part of the international community.

Nicaragua is an example of a country in which a process of peace and national reconciliation, with the support of the international community, at first had positive results under the leadership of the constitutional President of the Republic, Mrs. Violeta Barrios de Chamorro. As President Chamorro pointed out a short time ago from the rostrum of the General Assembly Hall, Nicaragua has before it the immense task of carrying out a transition from war to peace, from a centralized economy to a market economy and from confrontation to democratic consensus.

However, it must be recognized that the international community, lulled into overconfidence by the initial positive developments, gave too little attention and too little support during the period following the settlement of the conflict, which could be termed the period of "convalescence". It was in that period that the political situation deteriorated, and this caused a parallel deterioration in the economic and social situation.

The events that have taken place recently in Managua and other Nicaraguan cities show the fragility of the process of consolidating democracy and the resulting need for the international community's constant, sustained support for that process in the circumstances prevailing in a country such as Nicaragua. Obviously, it is up to the Nicaraguan people themselves to make decisive headway in the process of national reconciliation, with the participation of all the political and social forces. They should know, none the less, that in that endeavour they have the international community's encouragement and backing.

Any retrogression in the Nicaraguan process not only would have a serious effect on the country itself, but could also have negative repercussions in the Central American region, which is still emerging from a long period of conflict. For the same reason, the advances made in Nicaragua will mean progress in the shaping of a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development in Central America, in accordance with the objective stated in resolution 47/118, adopted at the last session of the General Assembly. In that resolution, the Assembly encouraged initiatives of the Central American countries to consolidate Governments which base their development on democracy, peace, cooperation and strict respect for human rights.

The close link between the process of political reconciliation and that of economic recovery in Nicaragua has been made clear by the Secretary-General in his report (A/48/318 and Corr.1) submitted to this session of the Assembly. It has also been underscored by the European Community and its member States, which, in their declaration of 26 August last, urged a genuine national reconciliation and requested all the political and social forces to join together, transcend their differences and work towards the strengthening of democracy and development in Nicaragua.

In resolution 47/169, adopted by consensus at the last session of the General Assembly, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the relevant organs and organizations of the United Nations system, to provide Nicaragua all possible assistance to support the consolidation of peace, in areas such as the settlement of displaced and demobilized persons and refugees, land ownership and land tenure in rural areas, direct care for war victims, mine clearance and, in general, to promote a process of sustained recovery and development that will render the peace and democracy achieved irreversible.

The Secretary-General's report highlights the advances that have been made in the political arena. Recent events indicate, however, that there is still a long way to go before they are consolidated. In the economic sphere, the stabilization programme has made major improvements possible through a reduced rate of inflation, and structural adjustments have expedited the conversion of the economic system into a market economy. However, these programmes have not been sufficient to reactivate the Nicaraguan economy, which, on account of demographic factors, is still showing a negative per capita growth rate. All of this has led to a worsening of social conditions, threatening consolidation of the country's fledgling democracy. Particularly worrying is the size of the external debt, which, according to the Secretary-General's report, is, on a per capita basis, the highest in the world.

Spain, both individually and as a member of the European Community, has been providing all possible assistance to Nicaragua in this crucial phase of its efforts to establish peace and democracy and to promote development. From the 1980s, because of the situation in that country, our cooperation has been directed primarily to the areas of health, housing, infrastructure and services. With the attainment of peace, our bilateral cooperation has intensified in the social, labour and technical training

sectors, in the fields of agriculture, fisheries and the environment and, very centrally, in institutional support, both national and local. Training and scientific and technical cooperation have been priorities in Spain's cooperation with Nicaragua. During the period 1990-1993, the value of Spanish grants in bilateral cooperation with Nicaragua reached 2,550 million pesetas.

For all these reasons, Spain urges the Secretary-General and the United Nations system to continue to give Nicaragua every possible assistance to consolidate and strengthen the democratic process and enhance the country's economic and social development. For these reasons, too, my delegation became a sponsor of draft resolution A/48/L.10, which we urge the General Assembly to adopt.

Mr. WISNUMURTI (Indonesia): I deem it a distinct honour and privilege to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement on this important item, entitled "International assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua: aftermath of the war and natural disasters". The Secretary-General's comprehensive report (A/48/318 and Corr.1), paints a sombre picture of the situation in Nicaragua and has rightly drawn our attention to the deteriorating economic conditions in that country.

At their tenth Summit meeting, held in Jakarta in September 1992, the non-aligned countries declared, inter alia, unequivocal support for Nicaragua's ongoing efforts to achieve its objectives, and expressed the hope that national dialogue, the deepening of the democratic process and continued international cooperation would make it possible to overcome the main obstacles facing that country in the present circumstances.

Reflecting this decision, the Foreign Ministers of the Non-Aligned Movement at their meeting earlier this month called upon the main political forces to continue their efforts towards a productive dialogue in order to achieve the social and economic reconstruction of Nicaragua. They also called upon the international community to maintain its support for Nicaragua to overcome political and economic problems and to consolidate its democracy.

Following a decade of civil strife, the Government of Nicaragua has made significant progress in achieving peace, reconciliation and national concertation, concertation which has made it possible to lay the foundations for economic recovery and social development. However, many obstacles lie ahead. The case of Nicaragua is unique. As a developing country, Nicaragua is indeed vulnerable to natural calamities such as have beset it recently. We believe that these calamities, which have exposed the vulnerability of Nicaragua's economy and of its environment, have rendered the nation incapable of advancing its development. Moreover, after years of turmoil, the nation's economy is critically in need of sustained assistance. The situation in Nicaragua clearly reflects the indivisibility of peace, stability and development. Indeed - and this is a highly charged political, economic and social question - peace cannot prevail unless such aid is substantial.

The cumulative effects of natural disasters, civil war and economic crisis have made the situation untenable and thus made Nicaragua a deserving candidate for concerted international support and assistance. We therefore reiterate our backing for resolutions 47/118 and 47/169. Significantly, they were adopted by consensus, which reflects recognition of the plight of the Nicaraguan people and of the need for the international community to give them the necessary support to promote and accelerate rehabilitation and economic and social reconstruction, in order to overcome the aftermath of the war and the adverse consequences of natural disasters.

Against this backdrop, we acknowledge the effective and comprehensive response of the United Nations and the way in which its efforts have been mobilized. Initial rehabilitative measures have already been embarked upon through the United Nations Development Programme and various other agencies of our Organization. The medium- and long-term measures comprehensively covered in the Secretary-General's report are indeed essential to the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua.

One of the serious problems that must be addressed urgently is the question of Nicaragua's external debt. Although Nicaragua is not considered to be a least-developed country, we firmly believe that, in view of its economic and social conditions and its vulnerability to nature, and taking into account its total debt in relation to population size, the nation should be accorded special treatment. We therefore strongly endorse the recommendation implied in paragraph 62 of the Secretary-General's report. In this regard, it is pertinent to note that the Non-aligned Movement is to hold a meeting - scheduled for later this year - on the foreign-debt problems of countries of the Movement. This may provide an opportunity to facilitate ways and means of resolving Nicaragua's debt problem.

I should like, in conclusion, to take this opportunity to express our solidarity with the Government and people

of Nicaragua at this time of great need and to add that we stand ready to provide our full support for these broad international cooperation endeavours.

Mr. FULCI (Italy): Italy wishes to reaffirm its strong commitment to the peace process in Central America, which began with the historic Esquipulas Agreements. My country wholeheartedly supports the Government and the people of Nicaragua as they develop their democracy and their economy. Over the past few years, Italy has contributed to this process - in deeds, and not in words alone - through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), by granting $115 million to establish the Development Programme for the Displaced, Refugee and Repatriated (PRODERE).

In countries scarred by armed conflict - be it internal or external - the primary and most urgent need is humanitarian assistance. But between emergency relief and new social and economic development, there is a need for rehabilitation, or convalescence, as was said quite rightly by our Spanish colleague, Ambassador Yáñez Barnuevo. PRODERE meets precisely that need for rehabilitation, or convalescence; it is a sort of *trait d'union* between the two major phases.

PRODERE is being implemented in six countries, including El Salvador and Nicaragua. It is designed primarily to create the conditions necessary for the social and economic integration of displaced people, refugees and those returning to their homes after a war. It concerns several dozen war-scarred municipalities, where rehabilitation and reconciliation can make a real difference.

We feel particularly indebted to UNDP for the exemplary way in which it has conducted this initiative, which has been a genuine success story, as all the participants can testify - so successful, in fact, that Italy and UNDP are seriously considering the possibility of extending the PRODERE approach to other parts of the world that have been, or are, afflicted by similar tragedies.

PRODERE's main features are: first, the programme is designed to bring together components of humanitarian relief and development aid; secondly, the entire community being resettled is, without any discrimination, involved: former soldiers, ex-guerrillas, local leaders, government officials, refugees, returnees and those who remained and suffered in place; thirdly, local organizations - including Government institutions, non-governmental organizations and cooperatives - actively participate in the programme; and, fourthly, it is the recipient community that identifies its priority needs, such as housing, health care, sanitation services and primary education. Agricultural projects and other income-generating activities are also a key target of PRODERE. In short, community participation, sustainable activities and human-resource development are at the heart of this unique programme. They are the keys to social integration, economic growth and institution rebuilding.

From this rostrum, Italy wants to pay a tribute to Nicaragua for its vigorous pursuit of political reconciliation and economic reconstruction. But we must remember that these are not goals that can be achieved overnight. They require determination, constant struggle and effort, not only from the interested countries themselves but from all of us. That is why Italy will continue to offer its unwavering support for this process on a bilateral basis, through the European Community and through the United Nations.

Consequently, Mr. President, I have the honour to inform you that Italy is glad to co-sponsor resolution A/48/L.10, introduced and so eloquently described by the Nicaraguan Deputy Foreign Minister, Mr. José Pallais, and to recommend its adoption by this Assembly.

Mr. MARRERO (United States of America): My delegation supports the draft resolution before us today under agenda item 45, entitled "International assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua: aftermath of the war and natural disasters", and looks forward to its adoption this morning by consensus.

My delegation knows that the Government of Nicaragua has critical need of external assistance to shore up its economy and to help consolidate its democracy. The Government of the United States supports Nicaragua's goal of national reconciliation and wants to see the Government succeed. With that in mind, my delegation believes that international economic assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua is essential if the Government is to continue to proceed along the path of a politically stable democratic nation.

We anticipate that the pending talks within Nicaragua will establish a new consensus towards healthy social and economic policies. We hope that such policies will address the dire conditions now prevailing in rural areas and restart productive activity. Furthermore, we look forward to the Nicaraguan Government's plans to invite grass-roots participation in the national dialogue on economic reform. United States aid programmes will place emphasis on that grass-roots participation in the economic life of the nation.

At the same time, and while recognizing how difficult the problems are, external aid alone cannot sustain or ensure the success of the Nicaraguan Government. In the final analysis, it is the Government and the people of Nicaragua that must continue to ensure the social and political stability which in turn inspires the confidence required to generate investment, both Nicaraguan and foreign.

We will continue to watch attentively and encouragingly as the Nicaraguan Government moves to implement its public commitments to its people. I should note that the assistance which my Government can offer through bilateral arrangements is undertaken in tandem with that of multilateral and other donor assistance. My Government is encouraged that at recent meetings of Nicaragua's international donors continued support has been expressed, with emphasis on the importance of national political reconciliation as the prerequisite for effective use of international assistance.

Mr. MARUYAMA (Japan) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: Five years ago, when presidential elections were held in Nicaragua in accordance with the democratic process, Japan expressed its sincere congratulations to the people of Nicaragua on the birth of a new democracy, through the Government of President Chamorro. From that time forward, Japan has expressed its sustained support for the Government of President Chamorro, particularly in the light of its commitment to national reconciliation and its efforts to strengthen the democratic process in Nicaragua.

Japan has always attached great value to President Chamorro's efforts to attain political reconciliation in her country during her presidential term. President Chamorro has opted for realistic policies which give priority to economic reconstruction, without neglecting the consequences of war but at the same time forging a democratic political culture based upon tolerance, reconciliation and dialogue.

The challenge in this effort is to maintain a delicate balance so as to make progress without endangering the achievements already attained. For that reason, the Government has sought to avoid confrontation with the Sandinistas, and has been obliged to face various difficulties in administering the country by giving consideration to the opinions of the opposition, which holds the majority of seats in the Congress. As regards the taking of hostages by groups from both extremes of the political spectrum, Japan welcomes the resolution of the problem, achieved through negotiations between the two sectors, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) and the National Opposition Union (UNO). Japan sincerely hopes that this dialogue will prompt a full development of the tripartite dialogue being pursued by the Nicaraguan Government with the aim of ensuring that political stability is firmly established, with the progress of national dialogue involving all sectors, which is fundamental for laying the foundations of economic development efforts. Japan also recognizes the efforts of the Government of Nicaragua to continue strengthening its democratic institutions, upholding human rights and attending to problems of social security, as well as finding a lasting solution to the question of property rights and clear civilian control over the armed forces. We support the achievements and we emphasize the need to persevere until the full consolidation of democratic institutions has been reached.

We must all recognize the great strides that have been made in the pacification of the Central American region. We must also be aware of the vital influence of the consolidation of peace and the reconstruction of Nicaragua on the stability of the whole Central American region. Accordingly, Japan acknowledges the diplomatic efforts made by the Latin American countries, particularly by Central Americans themselves, towards that common objective. Japan therefore firmly supports these efforts of the Latin American region.

Regarding support for Nicaragua, we must bear in mind, in addition to the efforts of the international community through bodies such as the United Nations, the cooperation conducted through the Association for Democracy and Development of Central America (ADD), which was set up in 1991. Japan has been taking an active part in various activities of the ADD since its inception, as co-chairman of the Working Group on Economic Development and also by chairing the Special Meeting of the ADD in Tokyo last March, with the participation of Foreign Ministers and Economic Ministers of the Central American countries. Japan will continue its active participation in these multilateral forums.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep condolences to the families of the victims of the natural disasters that have recently struck Nicaragua. Japan sincerely hopes that the Nicaraguan people can overcome these tragedies.

In conclusion, I wish once again to confirm, in this international forum, that Japan will continue its support for Nicaragua based on the two D's, democracy and development; we will support the promotion of democracy and cooperate in the economic reform of this friendly

country in a reliable and sustained manner. The Government of Japan supports the draft resolution and has the honour of being one of its co-sponsors.

The PRESIDENT: Before calling on the next speaker, I should like to propose that the list of speakers in the debate on this item now be closed.

It was so decided.

Mr. BIVERO (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Nicaragua's urgent need for rehabilitation and reconstruction has been acknowledged by successive resolutions of this Assembly and in the statements of various political and economic bodies of the Latin American and Caribbean region. On 16 October the Heads of State and Government of the Rio Group, meeting in Santiago, Chile, adopted a declaration on Nicaragua which is the most recent basis for our co-sponsorship of draft resolution A/48/L.10, introduced by the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua, which a group of countries, including Venezuela, is today submitting for consideration. The declaration is also our mandate for recommending the unanimous adoption of the draft resolution as a sign of solidarity with, and commitment to, the people and Government of Nicaragua.

Peace in Central America is a common goal of the Member States of our Organization. We have made numerous efforts to that end and we are sure that we all unreservedly share the desire to see peace consolidated there. Nicaragua is a critical element in the peace process in Central America. Its Government has made praiseworthy efforts to overcome political divisions and the economic and social aftermath of the country's recent history. Its President, Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, has given an eloquent account in this Hall of the successes achieved and the obstacles encountered in the process. We in Venezuela are convinced that she deserves our solid support.

Our Organization is increasingly guided by a recognition of the direct link between democracy, peace and development. Nicaragua is a clear-cut case of this interrelationship and of the negative effects that can result if any of these three fundamental objectives are neglected. We are particularly concerned by the difficulties Nicaragua has encountered in gaining an appropriate level of international cooperation to enable it to consolidate the advances achieved through its programmes of macroeconomic adjustment and internal reform. The international community faces an exceptional case which requires measures of support that are also exceptional. Undifferentiated treatment - and particularly treatment to which conditions are attached - must be avoided, in our view, not only for reasons of principle but also for obvious reasons of consistency with the undertaking in which we all play a part, to the extent that we are able: the success of democracy and national reconciliation in Nicaragua.

Venezuela, along with the other countries of the region - in particular in the Group of Three, to which it belongs, together with Colombia and Mexico - has been closely following the situation in Nicaragua. So far as it can, Venezuela will carry out a policy of cooperation with that country which we hope will help to alleviate its difficult economic situation and will strengthen the growing links with its economy, in both the commercial and financial spheres.

We hope this will not be an isolated effort, and we are pleased to recommend again that the draft resolution be adopted by the General Assembly without a vote, as an immediate, concrete manifestation of the solidarity which we are sure the Organization maintains and will continue to maintain with Nicaragua.

Mr. TATTENBACH (Costa Rica) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: Allow me, in speaking for the first time in the General Assembly at this session, to congratulate you most cordially, Sir, and the other officers of the Assembly on the outstanding manner in which our work is being guided and to express my delegation's best wishes for your success.

With regard to the agenda item entitled "International assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua: aftermath of the war and natural disasters," I should like, on behalf of the six Central American States, to begin by recalling that, in General Assembly resolution 46/109 B, adopted as a result of Nicaragua's first steps to end the fighting in the region, Central America was declared a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development. Therefore, on behalf of the Central American countries I wish to express our strong solidarity with Nicaragua in connection with the agenda item before us today.

The San Juan River flows between Costa Rica and Nicaragua, both a symbol of union and a geographical boundary, a waterway over which both countries enjoy navigation rights. For a long time, from colonial days until the early years of the last century, that river was an important channel between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Given the economic interests of the era, it also made Nicaragua a focus of conflict.

It is easy to understand why that waterway between the two oceans - the only one in the continent prior to the construction of the Panama Canal - changed Nicaragua into a region of major political interest, even for the European Powers. Suffice it to recall that a naval battle was once waged on the San Juan River - a battle in which so famous and distinguished a figure as Admiral Nelson participated.

Thus, Nicaragua is a country that, owing to its geographical position, has always been involved in one way or another in political and military conflicts. Furthermore, for the same reason, its socio-political life has had, to varying degrees, a constant influence on its Central American neighbours. That history of political and military conflict, which originally had to do with geographic and economic interests, has extended to geopolitical interests, most recently as a result of the East-West conflict, the so-called cold war, which, fortunately, has now come to an end.

We Central Americans have been closely following the process of pacification and democratization initiated by the President of Nicaragua, Mrs. Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, a process summed up in the three-fold transition through which the country is going, namely, demilitarization, democratization and a change from a centralized to a free-market economy.

That three-fold transition, in addition to the natural disasters that have occurred in Nicaragua over the past three years in the form of volcanic eruptions, tidal waves and hurricanes, has left the country in an extremely difficult economic situation and faced with enormous social pressures that jeopardize its great efforts to consolidate peace and thereby the region's political, economic and social stability.

A country with an economy that is experiencing a level of unemployment and underemployment of over 40 per cent; a country with an external debt of $10.8 billion that entails debt-servicing obligations of nearly $1 billion per year when its exports amount to barely $280 million; a country that is facing social and political pressures as a result of the dramatic reduction in its armed forces and the transition from a totalitarian to a democratic regime: such a country needs to be governed with the greatest patriotism and care and with all the necessary moral and material support from the international community.

That patriotic and prudent Government to which I am referring is the creation of its President, Mrs. Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, who has, since assuming office in April 1990, set the goal of totally pacifying her country, of consolidating an economic system based on the free market and thereby establish an equitable economic system, and of laying the foundation for a deepening and strengthening of the democratic process.

Here I would recall the following words used by the Secretary-General in his report on the work of the Organization for this year:

> "Without peace, there can be no development and there can be no democracy. Without development, the basis for democracy will be lacking and societies will tend to fall into conflict. And without democracy, no sustainable development can occur; without such development, peace cannot long be maintained." *(A/48/1, para. 11)*

And I would reaffirm that definitive peace cannot be achieved without sustained development and that sustained development cannot exist in so small a country as Nicaragua unless, parallel with its domestic efforts, it can enjoy sufficient economic and financial support from the international community and the financial institutions of its system.

For those reasons we wish to express to Nicaragua our complete approval of the steps which it is taking to obtain international support and which have been so ably described to this meeting of the forty-eighth session of the Assembly by the Vice-Minister for External Relations, Mr. José Pallais.

The countries of Central America fully support draft resolution A/48/L.10, and we hope that the international community represented here will adopt it enthusiastically and unanimously.

Mr. RICARDES (Argentina) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: My delegation is speaking on this item to express its country's support for the appeal made by the President of Nicaragua, Mrs. Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, in her statement during the general debate in the Assembly.

In this connection, we believe that the international community should give increasing priority to the economic recovery of Nicaragua as part of a comprehensive process of economic growth and full social development for its people.

These efforts should be accompanied by assistance from international financial agencies and regional, interregional and non-governmental organizations, in view of the exceptional situation in that fraternal country.

Furthermore, this is an essential contribution to the democratic stability of Nicaragua in particular and the entire Central American region in general. The assistance we are requesting should include - as set out in General Assembly resolution 47/169 - activities for the recovery, reconstruction, development and consolidation of peace of that country. The aim of the comprehensive effort to which we have referred is to strengthen the peace and democracy that have now been established in Nicaragua.

In that regard, my country wishes to reaffirm its enduring commitment to finding a solution to the economic problems of Nicaragua and its readiness to continue cooperating in the areas open to it with a view to helping in the reconstruction of the country so as to promote the consolidation of the atmosphere of peace and *détente* that has emerged in the region since the coming of democracy.

In line with its firm commitments to cooperation with the Republic of Nicaragua, my country has developed a number of technical cooperation projects between our two countries. Among the objectives pursued by these cooperation projects, may be mentioned the improvement of human resources, agriculture, forestry, fisheries and energy. Similarly, the Republic of Argentina has also signed a debt-cancellation convention with the Republic of Nicaragua as my country's further contribution to economic assistance to a brother nation.

The Government of Argentina also feels that it is of crucial importance to reaffirm its full support for constitutional democracy in Nicaragua, the only political system guaranteeing peoples' basic freedoms and social and economic progress.

In conclusion, my delegation lends its full support to the draft resolution submitted for the Assembly's consideration, and hopes that it will be adopted without a vote.

Mr. JARAMILLO (Colombia) *(interpretation from Spanish):* For Colombia, Central America is an area of vital interest. We have followed closely, with great interest and all our attention, the developments in that area. Nicaragua is a fundamental part of the development of Central and Latin America. That is why we have co-sponsored the draft resolution on international assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction Nicaragua.

No one can doubt the efforts that have been made by the people and Government of Nicaragua. We urge the international community to contribute decisively to the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua.

We have stressed in various forums, on our own behalf and on behalf of the Group of 77, the importance of continuity - I stress continuity - in the rehabilitation process in the aftermath of the war and natural disasters. We are convinced that peace is built on deeds.

Mr. PALLAIS (Nicaragua) *(interpretation from Spanish):* I wish to express Nicaragua's sincere appreciation for the broad support that has been given by so many friendly countries in this debate.

I am pleased to announce that a consensus has been reached on the draft resolution, and we urge its immediate adoption after we have taken note of the following revisions of the text of document A/48/L.10.

In the third preambular paragraph, the word "enormous" should be deleted.

Following operative paragraph 1, an additional paragraph should be introduced to read as follows:

> "2. Encourages the Government of Nicaragua to continue its efforts aimed at reconstruction and national reconciliation;"

That paragraph will become operative paragraph 2 and the remaining paragraphs will be renumbered accordingly.

The third and last revision is to operative paragraph 3, which was formerly paragraph 2. The words "provision concerning" and "in the case" should be deleted. The revised section of that paragraph would then read as follows:

> "... giving particular attention to the exceptional circumstances of Nicaragua ..."

These are the only revisions to the draft resolution.

The PRESIDENT: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I should like to announce that the following States have become sponsors of draft resolution A/48/L.10: Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Japan, Mongolia, Nepal, Norway, Paraguay, the Philippines, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States of America and Uruguay.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/48/L.10, as orally revised.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/48/L.10, as orally revised, by consensus?

Draft resolution A/48/L.10, as orally revised, was adopted (resolution 48/8).

The PRESIDENT: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 45?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12 noon